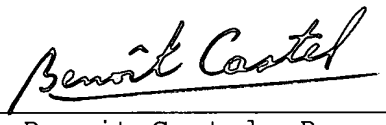
Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON



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March 4, 2002

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Three new paragraphs have been added on page 9, between lines 26 and 27.

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims have been amended as follows:

--5. (Amended) Process according to claim 3 [or 4], characterized in that, at the step (vii), the blend is put at a temperature of about 4°C for about 16 hours.--

--6. (Amended) Process according to [anyone of claims 3 to 5] claim 3, characterized in that the step (ix), is carried out by a slow addition of a sodium hydroxide solution until a pH of aobut 7.5 is reached.--

--7. (Amended) Process according to [anyone of claims 3 to 6] claim 3, characterized in that at the step (ix) the blend is cooled in an ice bath and the pH is continuously followed so that the pH does not exceed 10.--

--9. (Amended) Process according to [anyone of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the chosen acetic

anhydride quantity is 3.2 mols/mol of anhydroglucose.--

--10. (Amended) Process according to [anyone of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the chosen esterification time ranges from 20 to 30 mn.--

--11. (Amended) Process according to [anyone of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the chosen esterification temperature is 40°C.--

--12. (Amended) Process according to [anyone of the preceding claims] claim 1, characterized in that the starting cellulose material is selected in the group comprising cellulose residues purified from co-products derived from agriculture and, more particularly, from cereal bran, for example wheat and corn, but also from wood cellulose, for example, pine-tree, or microcrystalline cellulose.--

--14. (Amended) Derivative blend according to [the preceding claim] claim 13, characterized in that said derivatives have a sulphation degree ranging from 0.2 to 0.6.--

--16. (Amended) Derivative blend according to [anyone of claims 13 to 15] claim 13, characterized in that only the carbon

atom which is in position 6 of the anhydroglucose cycles of said derivatives is sulphated.--

--17. (Amended) Derivative blend according to [anyone of claims 13 to 16] claim 13, characterized in that said derivatives have a viscosimetric mean polymerization degree determined in cupric ethylene diamine at 25°C ranging from 210 to 1590.--

--18. (Amended) Derivative blend according to [anyone of claims 15 to 17] claim 15, characterized in that said blend intrinsic viscosity, determined by extrapolation at nil concentration of the reduced viscosity measured in water at 25°C ranges from 600 to 1500ml/g.--

--19. (Amended) Blend according to [anyone of claims 13 to 18] claim 13, characterized in that said derivatives have such water retention properties that in the presence of salts, they swell up to 200 ml/g while remaining insoluble.--

--20. (Amended) Blend according to [anyone of claims 13 to 19] claim 13, characterized in that it is free from triacetylated derivatives.--

--21. (Amended) Blend according to [anyone of claims 13

to 20] claim 13, characterized in that said derivatives are thermally stable for 16 hours at 80°C.--

--22. (Amended) Blend according to [anyone of claims 13 to 21] claim 13, characterized in that it has the form of a thermoreversible and partially thixotropic gel.--